



PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

Heritage Impact Statement

25b High Street (Methwold Old Butchers Shop
Old Cottage), Thetford, Methwold, IP26 4NT

Change of use from vacant butcher's shop
(class E) to 1-bedroom dwellinghouse (C3)
and replace the existing asbestos roof with red
tiles.

On Behalf of Mr. Daniel Reed

Drafted by **Planning By Design**

Date: 18 March 2024

1. Introduction and Methodology

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Planning by Design and was produced in February 2024.

This assessment is intended to accompany an application for planning permission and listed building consent for the proposed Change of use from vacant butcher's shop (class E) to 1-bedroom dwellinghouse (C3) and replace the existing asbestos roof with red tiles at: 25b High Street (Methwold Old Butchers Shop), Thetford, Methwold, IP26 4NT.

The aim of this report is to satisfy the requirement of paragraph 200 (previously paragraph 194) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which indicates that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected by their proposals (including any contribution made by their setting).

This assessment is informed by an analysis of the site, the existing buildings and their environs. The Heritage Statement is further informed by an analysis of historic maps of the area, and a review of known information about the site from various sources (including the Historic Environment Record (HER)).

2. Heritage Planning Context / Site Location

The site is situated on the northern side of High Street, Methwold, and comprises the former butcher's shop which has been vacant for some time now. The property is set back from the main road with a shared driveway. The building is constructed of red bricks and asbestos roof and is attached to no.23 and no.25a High Street. It is also located adjacent to the fire station.

The site lies within village centre and within the Conservation Area. The property is also classed as a non-designated heritage asset.

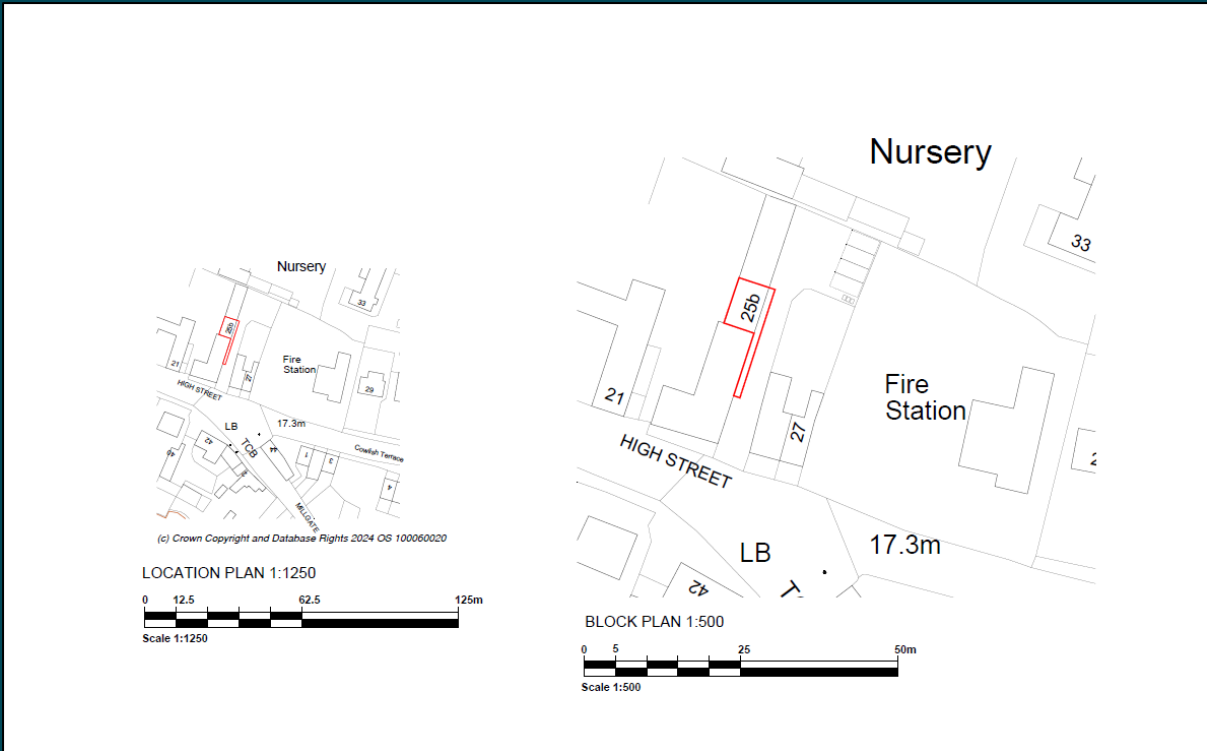


Fig 1 – location and block plan

3. Proposed Works

The client would like to change the use of the vacant old butcher shop to 1 a one-bedroom residential dwelling under use class C3.

As part of the proposal there will be only minor changes to the external elevations, such as window changes, a roof material change, and the addition of a rear roof light to support the proposed use.

Alterations will also include the reinstatement of the previous old window (in the place of the existing black door) on the principle elevation of the property, the proposed window will be within the style, form, and materials of the original. Windows to the rear of the site will also be obscured glazed to ensure appropriate privacy levels. The roof material's will also be altered to a more modern, safer material, which will also be in keeping with other local properties.

The proposed works will also involve an internal fit out to support the new usage, involving stud walls, furnishings and fittings accommodate en-suite bathrooms and so forth. These would be kept to a minimum, and standalone where possible, therefore not affecting the special interest features of the building or be alterations that remove, replace or cover historic decoration, fixtures or fittings.

The specifics of the floor plans proposed, dimensions and design can be found within the accompanying planning drawings.



Fig.5 – Photo showing existing frontal elevation with black door rather than window.



Fig.3 – Photo Showing pre-existing window to be reinstated.



Fig.4 – Historic Photo showing pre-existing window.

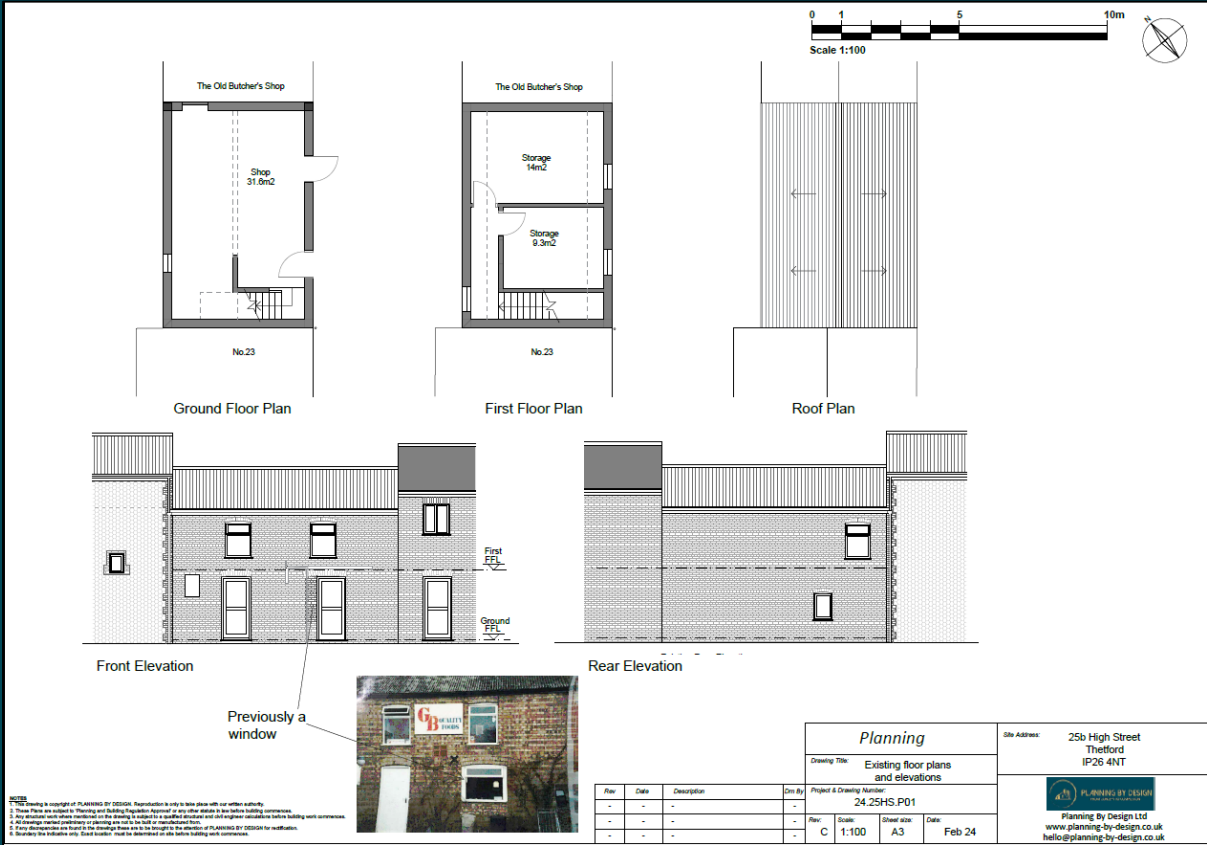


Fig. 6 - Existing Floor Plans and Elevations

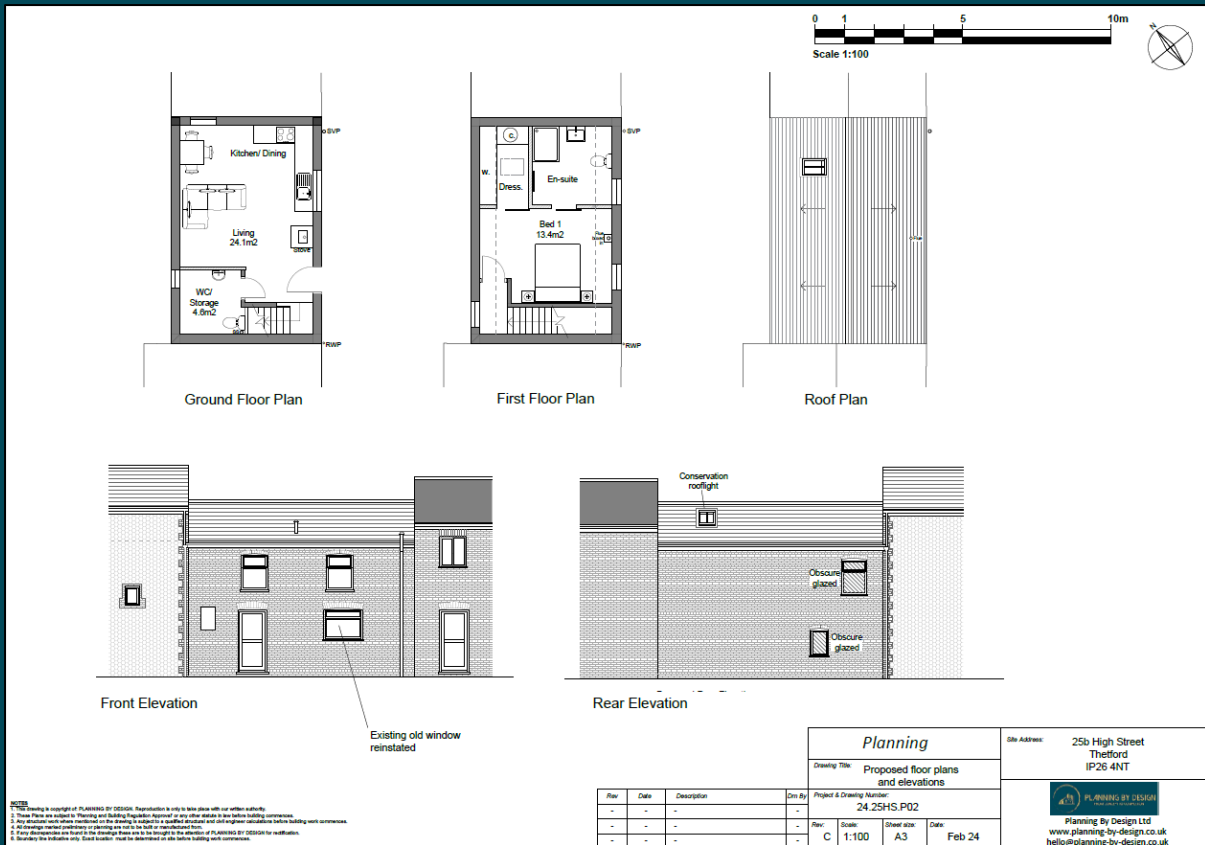


Fig.7 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

4. Legislation, planning policy and guidance.

The proposals should be assessed in accordance with the following policies and guidance which seek to protect the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
- National Planning Practice Guidance –Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment (Revised July 2019)
- Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 “Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment”
- Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 “The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition)”
- Peterborough Local Plan (adopted 2019).

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11-14).

The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to satisfy paragraph 200 (previously paragraph 194) of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that ‘In determining applications,

local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contributions made by their setting' and to assess whether the proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as regards its impact on the historic environment.

The NPPF requires in the case of all heritage assets, designated or otherwise, that local planning authorities should take into account 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of such heritage assets and of putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation' (NPPF 2023 paragraph 203a – previously 197a).

If the development will lead to 'substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 207 (previously paragraph 202) of the NPPF indicates that the development should be refused consent by the local planning authority, unless it can be proved that the loss or damage to the asset can be outweighed by substantial benefits to the public or if the proposal can meet a number of specific conditions. If the development leads to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 208 indicates that this harm still needs to be assessed against the public benefit of the scheme and whether or not the viability of the site is being optimised.

In contrast to designated heritage assets, the NPPF does not require planning authorities to give 'great weight' to the conservation of non-designated heritage assets. It does not require that harm requires 'clear and convincing justification'. Instead, the NPPF states that: 'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.' (NPPF paragraph 209).

Paragraph 138 of the Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance states that new work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a) there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;
- b) the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
- c) the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;
- d) the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

5. Local Planning Policy

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016

- Policy DM15

LDF Core Strategy Policies

- CS12 - Environmental Assets

6. Assessment of Significance

Heritage Assets

The heritage assets affected by the development include:

- Methwold Conservation Area
- Non-Designated Heritage Asset

The Conservation Area and Non – Designated Heritage Asset

The site is within Methwold Conservation Area and marked on the below map as a non-designated heritage asset. Methwold is sited near the edge of both the fens, the brecks and Thetford Forest. The village lies at a crossroads to B1106 and B1112 and is located some 18miles South East of Kings Lynn. Methwold Conservation Area was designated in April 1988.

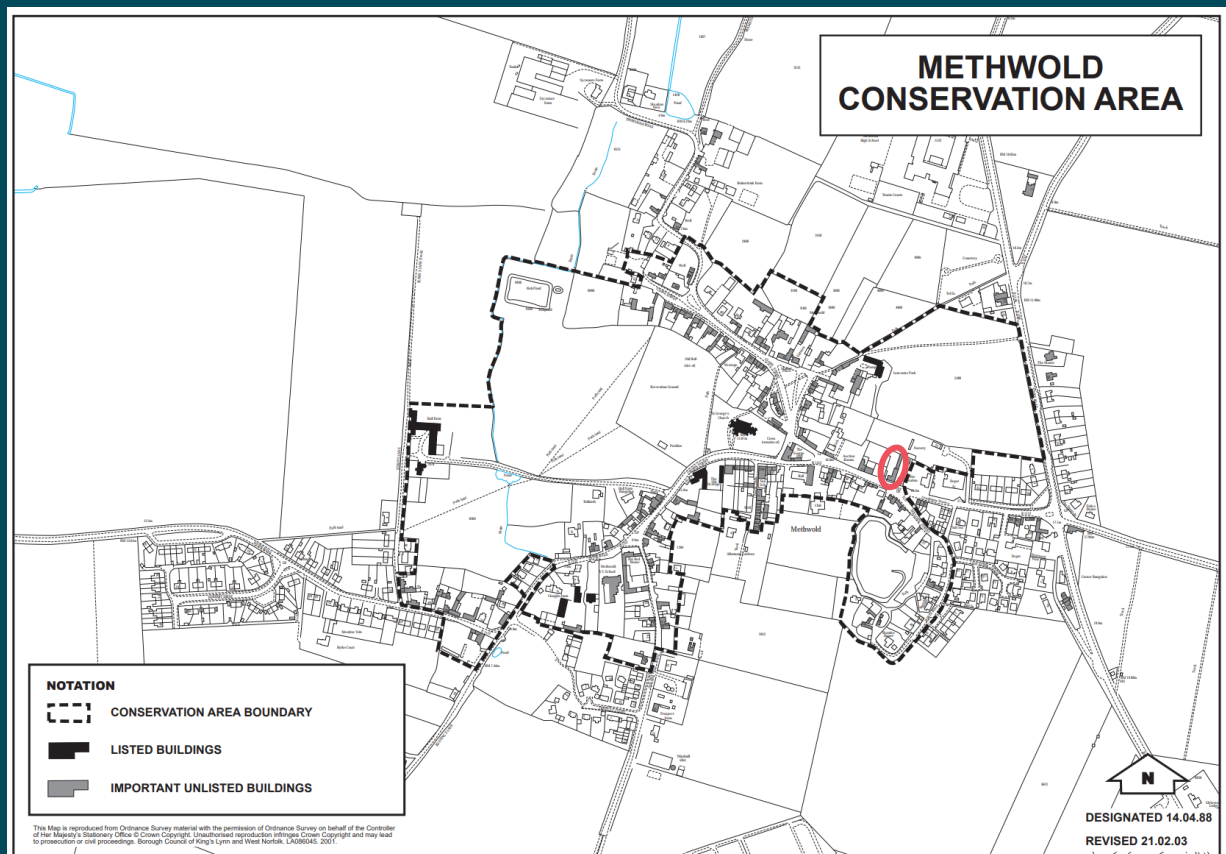


Fig.2 Methwold Conservation Area Boundary Map (site marked with red circle)

Regarding buildings and spaces, the Methwold Conservation Area Character Appraisal notes:

“The buildings and spaces of Methwold link well together to form a cohesive whole. Hythe Road and Crown Street wind from the lower to higher ground forming a series of well-defined

individual spaces with a good sense of enclosure. In the east, Millgate and White Road hug the perimeter of the large village chalk pit, creating a feature which draws the eye onwards round the curve and the buildings have the effect of deflecting views, creating additional visual interest. The centre and north of the village consist mainly of buildings from the 18th and 19th Centuries formally laid out around the Market Place and the wide space of Globe Street. The built-up area of the conservation area has a fine rural setting to both its east and west prospects.”

Concerning important unlisted buildings, such as the application site, it notes:

“Much of Methwold's character rests on the vernacular styles of its historic but unlisted buildings. 135 of these buildings have been identified, representing 67 per cent of the total number of buildings in the conservation area.

These important unlisted buildings have been identified because of their prominent position, use of traditional materials, their character is substantially intact, and because they often relate to other historic buildings close by.”

In terms of building materials it states: *“The character of Methwold Conservation Area owes a great deal to the use of local traditional materials in the construction of its historic buildings.*

These materials include :

- *Chalk: rough blockwork (coursed and random)*
- *Flint: field nodules (coursed and random); also knapped flint*
- *Buff Gault clay bricks*
- *Red brick*
- *Colourwash especially in south western part of the conservation area*
- *Normal red and black glazed pantiles*
- *Welsh slate*

Methwold is dominated by chalk and flint walling with buff brick dressings. On a number of traditional houses these brick dressings have been painted to create even greater contrast with the flint panels. Chalk boundary walling is a feature of the village, often with tarred copings.”

In terms of detractors, it states: *“The special quality of conservation areas can easily be eroded by seemingly minor alterations such as unsuitable replacement windows and doors, inappropriate materials or unsympathetic paintwork, removal of walls, railings, trees and hedges.*

Within the Methwold Conservation Area, there are few features which detract significantly from its intrinsic character.”

Assessment of Heritage Impact of the Proposed Development

The works proposed through this application would have no detrimental material impact on the significance of the building or Conservation Area. No excavation will be taking place and as such the impact upon the area of Archaeological Significance will also be neutral.

As discussed, to support the change of use there will be a replacement of a door at the frontal elevation with window in the style of the original; The replacement window will match the form, materials, and style of the pre-existing, arguably enhancing and restoring the heritage asset. The roof material will be replaced with safer material and will match neighbouring properties, the proposed roof lights will also be located on the rear aspect of the property and will therefore not be incongruous with the streetscape or setting.

Due to the siting of the property set back from the High Street, the site is not immediately visible from the streetscape, or any other public viewpoint; Therefore, alterations will not dominate or detract from the special historic character of the site or its setting within Methwold Conservation Area.

In term of interior works, whilst the proposal will make us of the existing floorplan for the most part, and will not remove any existing walls, there will be partitions added internally. To ensure the works are as unobtrusive as possible, the materials used for partitions/ new layout will be timber framed stud walls, thus preserving the fabric of the building.

Additionally, from the attached architectural drawings included within the application it can clearly be seen that the development is of a high-quality and tasteful design, sympathetic to the character of the building and area. The proposed change of use will be designed and executed in a manner that respects and complements the architectural style and period of the building. The interior design and furnishings will be chosen to be sympathetic to the historic character of the space, ensuring a cohesive and harmonious integration of the proposed use within the existing fabric of the building.

By altering the usage of the vacant (old butcher shop) building to a dwelling, the proposal will ensure that the building is returned to active use, which will prevent it from remaining vacant, and falling into disrepair or becoming neglected. Vacant buildings are more susceptible to deterioration and damage, which can negatively impact their historic fabric. By introducing a new use, such as a dwelling, the building is revitalised, and its maintenance and preservation become more viable.

The proposal therefore preserves, enhances, and sustains the building and its associated special character, significance, appearance, special architectural and historic interest of the assets in terms of scale, siting, function, design, and materials. The proposal also preserves the areas historic significance, and respects the character and appearance of the heritage asset. It can therefore be considered less than harmful and compliant with national and local policy and regulations; It's impact upon the heritage asset will therefore be neutral.

7. Conclusion

The statement has provided details of designated heritage assets affected by the proposed development, along with an assessment of the impact of the proposal on their significance.

It is considered that no significant harm will occur to the building or the surrounding conservation area as a result of the works and can be considered sustainable development which will contribute to enhancing and preserving the heritage assets' special character.

The proposed development presented in this application is policy-compliant with local policy, sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF.